- 25. (Amended) a method of embedding auxiliary information in data, wherein the auxiliary information is not lost with compression of the data, the data initially comprising a non-compressed form including the auxiliary information embedded therein, and wherein combined data comprises the non-compressed form including the auxiliary information, said method comprising:
  - (a) retrieving the auxiliary information from the combined data;
  - (b) compressing the combined data; and
- (c) embedding the auxiliary information in the compressed combined data, whereby the compressed combined data comprises the auxiliary information embedded therein.
- 26. (Amended) A method of embedding auxiliary information in data, wherein the auxiliary information is not lost with decompression of the data from a compressed form to a non-compressed form and wherein the compressed form includes the auxiliary information, said method comprising:
  - (a) retrieving the auxiliary information from the compressed form;
- (b) decompressing the compressed form to yield the non-compressed form; and
- (c) steganographically embedding the auxiliary information in the non-compressed form, whereby the non-compressed form of the data comprises the auxiliary information embedded therein.



32. (Amended) The method of claim 26 wherein the decompressing comprises

## 33. (Amended) A method comprising:

retrieving auxiliary information from a data signal, wherein the auxiliary information is encoded in the data signal, and wherein the auxiliary information is retrieved from the data signal while the data signal comprises a non-compressed form;

compressing the data signal; and

embedding the retrieved auxiliary information in the compressed data signal, wherein the compressed data signal comprises the retrieved auxiliary information.

- 34. (Amended) The method of claim 33, wherein the retrieved auxiliary information is steganographically retrieved from the non-compressed data signal.
- 35. (Amended) The method of claim 34, wherein the retrieved auxiliary information is embedded in the compressed data signal in the form of a steganographic watermark.

37. (Amended) A method comprising:

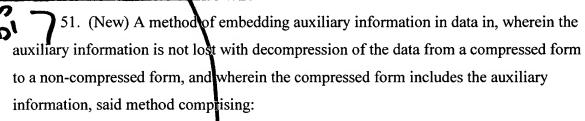
retrieving auxiliary information from a data signal, wherein the auxiliary information is encoded in the data signal, and wherein the auxiliary information is retrieved from the data signal while the data signal comprises a compressed form;

decompressing the compressed data signal to yield a de-compressed data signal; and

embedding the retrieved auxiliary information in the de-compressed data signal, wherein the decompressed data signal comprises digital data, whereby the de-compressed data signal comprises the auxiliary information embedded therein.

\*Please add new claim 51 as follows:







- (a) retrieving the auxiliary information from the compressed form;
- (b) decompressing the compressed form to yield the non-compressed form; and
- (b) embedding the auxiliary information in the non-compressed form, wherein the non-compressed form of the data comprises the auxiliary information embedded therein, and wherein the non-compressed form including the auxiliary information embedded therein comprises digital data,